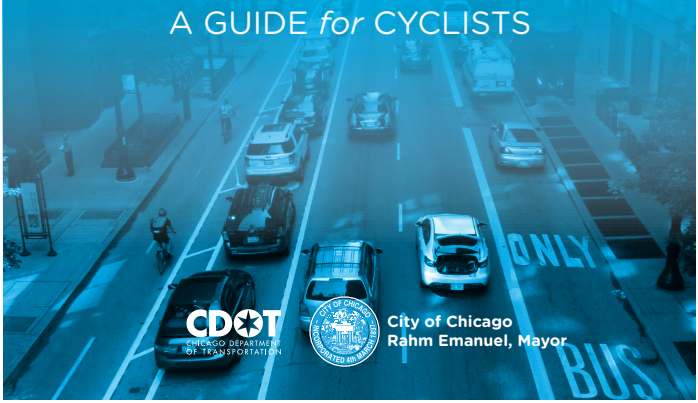
FREE

SAFE CYCLING IN CHICAGO

A GUIDE *for* CYCLISTS



CDOT
CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

City of Chicago
Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

TABLE *OF* CONTENTS

Ride A Bike! 1
Buying a Bike 2
Types of Bikes 3
Helmets 4
Locking Your Bike 5
Carrying Things 6
Register Your Bike 7
Bike Maintenance 8
How to Fix a Flat Tire 9
Bicycle Laws 10-12
Traffic Basics 13
Types of bike lanes 14-15
Riding in Traffic 16
Hand Signals 17
Turning 18
The “Door Zone” 19
What to Do in a Crash 20-21
Streets for Cycling 22
Bikes on Transit 22
Bikes on Transit 23
Off Street Cycling 24
Riding at Night 25
Riding in Bad Weather 26

RIDE A BIKE!

Bicycling is a great way to get around your neighborhood and around town. It is healthy, economical, environmentally friendly and a wonderful way to discover Chicago.

From locking your bike to fixing a flat tire, you will find all sorts of useful information inside this Safe Cycling in Chicago booklet. Riding a bike can lead to a life-long transportation choice that's good for you, your community and the environment.

We invite you to review this booklet and discover for yourself why Chicago is a great city for bicycling.

Photo: Serge Lubomudrov

BUYING A BIKE

When buying a bike wear clothes like the ones you plan to bike in regularly and take a test ride like the riding you will do to work, school and around the city.

Also consider these things:·

What kind of riding you plan to do and what type of bike is best suited for you.

The cost of the bike.

The cost of a lock, lights, helmet and other accessories like a rack and fenders.

Whether you can exchange parts for better fit or use.

Guarantees and warranties on the purchase.

Bike shop quality and service.

Remember

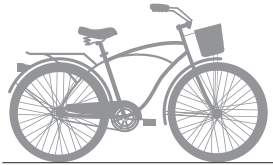
If your bike budget is small consider buying a used bike. Used bikes can be found at thrift shops and yard sales for cheap. Working Bikes Cooperative have a used bike sale on weekends. Go to: www.workingbikes.org for more information.

If you plan to buy a used bike make sure it is in good working order. A used bike that needs work may be more costly to fix than buying a new bike and might be dangerous to ride. Having a used bike tuned-up may be an affordable and reliable solution.

TYPES OF BIKES

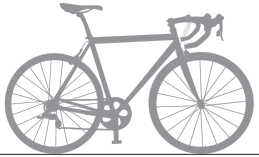
Different types of bikes are good for different styles of riding. Consider what kind of riding you'll do most when choosing a bike.

Mountain Bikes have wide knobby tires and low gears for riding off road as well as an aggressive position for technical trail riding.



Cruisers have a laid-back upright position, wide, smooth tires and usually just a single speed for leisurely rides on streets and paths.

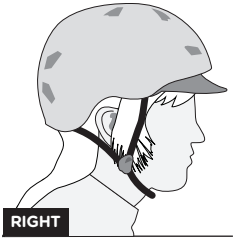
Cross or Hybrids are a mix between a mountain and road bike with semi-slick tires, wide gearing and an upright but active position. Cross bikes make excellent commuter bikes for their versatile use.

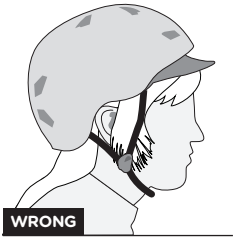


Road Bikes have narrow slick tires, high gears and an aggressive position for fast speeds and racing on smooth clear pavement.

HELMETS

Always wear a bicycle helmet to reduce the risk of permanent injury or death from a crash. To make sure your helmet fits right, put it on and then use the "eyes/ears/mouth" test.





Eyes
When you look up you should see the front rim of the helmet. If not, your helmet won't protect your forehead.

Ears
The side straps should come to a "V" just below each ear. Mouth: When you open your mouth wide, you should feel the helmet push down on your head. If your helmet doesn't pass the test, adjust the straps or add bigger pads to get the right fit.

Ventilation
Good air flow comes from long, wide vents that channel air through the helmet to keep you cool.

Cost
You can spend well over $100 for the latest space age helmet, but a good safety-rated helmet goes for around $30.

! Tip

Replace your helmet if it becomes damaged in an accident. Also replace a helmet every two years. The foam inside becomes hard and stale and will not absorb shock as well as it should.

LOCKING YOUR BIKE

Always lock your bike, even if you are just leaving it for a moment. Always use a high quality U-lock. U-locks are strong and better ones come with theft warranties.

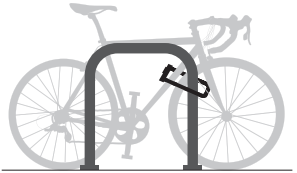
Always lock through the frame and at least one wheel. Add a cable to lock both wheels. Always lock to something secure like a bike rack, parking meter or firmly affixed sign pole. Beware of locking to "sucker poles" that are loosely bolted down and can easily be removed.

Remove detachable items like lights, bags and quick release parts from your bike and take them with you.

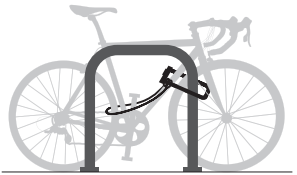
Consider replacing quick release parts with ones that bolt on for greater convenience and security. Lock your bike close by and keep it in view as much as possible.

Lock near entrances and well-lit, secure areas. Lock your bike inside if space is available. Lock your bike when keeping it in a garage or other unattended indoor area.

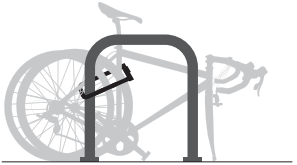
Always lock the frame and one wheel to the bike rack.



For greater security, use both a u-lock and a cable

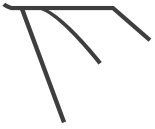


For long-term parking, lock the frame and both wheels to the rack.

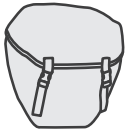


CARRYING THINGS

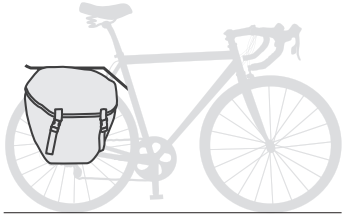
Carrying your stuff does not have to be a pain in the back. It is easy to carry things on your bike.



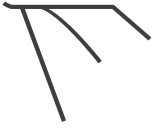
A rack **+**



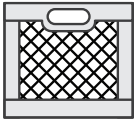
A pannier **=**



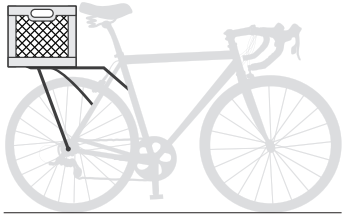
A bike ready to haul



A rack **+**



A milk crate **=**



A bike prepared to carry

! Remember

A heavy backpack can strain your neck and shoulders, making it difficult to balance and control your bike. Carrying things in hand is dangerous and makes it hard to brake and shift.

REGISTER YOUR BIKE

Register your bike with the Chicago Police Department and campus security if a student. A stolen bike is much more likely to be returned if it is registered. You can pick up a Chicago Police Department registration form at most bike shops or register online at: ***chicagocompletestreets.org/bikeregistration***

Bicycle registration card

Make

Model

Year

Color

Serial number

Type

Wheel size

Keep a record of your bike's make, model and serial number.If your bike is stolen report it to police by calling 311. Tell them when and where it was stolen, the make, model and its serial number and a call back number you can be reached at. They will call you with a report number to be used with insurance claims. They will call again if your bike is recovered.

Mark your bike to show ownership if stolen and recovered.

Engrave your name or an I.D. number on your bike.

Insert an info card into your tire that identifies you as the owner.

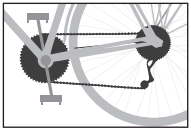
Insert an info card into your handlebar or seat post.

BIKE MAINTENANCE

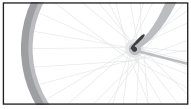
Maintaining your bike in good working condition is as easy as an ABC Quick Check. Do the Check before each ride. Regular maintenance prevents breakdowns and keeps you riding safely.

Check the **Air** in tires for pressure by leaning all your weight on the bike and seeing if the tires bulge. If so, fill to recommended pressure printed on the side of the tire. Bikes roll faster and get fewer flats with tires filled to pressure.

Check the **Brakes** by pulling the levers and rocking on the wheels. If the brakes are working right the wheels should skid when bike is pushed.



Check that the **Chain** moves quietly and smoothly when back pedaling. Lube chain regularly to keep running well. Wipe off excess lube from outside of chain with a rag. Excess lube attracts dirt.



Check that any **Quick** release parts are tightly secured. Levers curved in towards the bike are locked. Levers curved away are unlocked and are in danger of coming off while riding.

Check your bike by giving the wheels a spin (to check for rubbing) and give bike a bounce (to listen for loose rattling parts).

HOW TO FIX A FLAT

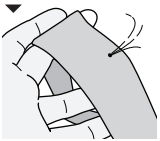
Remove

1. Lay your bike on its side or stand it upside down.
2. Use a tire lever to pry the tire over the rim. Leave the lever between the tire and the rim so it does not pop back in. If you don't have another lever, insert a flat stick.

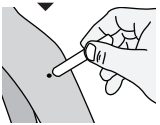
3. Using a second lever a few inches from the first lever, pry out more of the tire. Move around the tire until you've pried out the entire side.
4. Reach under the tire and pull out the tube.
5. To get the valve out of the rim, hold the tire away from the valve with your thumb. Use your other hand to pull out the valve.

Find

6. Pump air into the tube until it's stretched tight. If you can't find the hole in the tube by listening, lightly grab the tube with a circle made by your thumb and fingers. Run your hand around the tube until you feel a stream of air.



7. If the hole's too big to patch (bigger than a pinhole) or it's next to the valve stem, you must remove the wheel and replace the tube.
8. Make the hole with a pen or chalk.



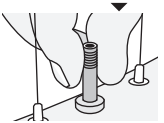
Patch

9. Delate the tube by pushing in the valve stem.
10. Using sanding pad, roughen the tube around the hold in an area about as big as a quarter.

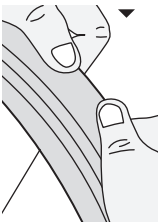
11. Squeeze a little glue out of the container and using the container's nozzle to smear the glue over the roughened area.
12. Taking care not to touch the glue, hold the tube against the tire to find where the puncture occurred. Run your fingers along to underside and remove any debris.
13. Remove the foil back from the patch onto the glued area and press for a minute.

Replace

14. Put the value into the rim hole and pump a little air into the tube. Work the tube into the tire making sure the tube does not get twisted.



15. Using your thumbs, push the tire inside the rim Don't pinch the tube between the rim and the tire.



16. Push the valve most of the way into the tire. Ensure the tire sits in the rim evenly.

ILLINOIS BICYCLE LAWS

Bicyclists are subject to the same laws as other users of the road. It is your responsibility to know and respect the rules of the road. Below are some Illinois bicycle laws. To learn more about Illinois and Chicago bicycle laws, visit: ***chicagocompletestreets.org/bikelaws.***

Lane Positioning:

When riding roadways and bicycle paths at less than normal traffic speed, and as close and safe to the right-hand curb or edge of roadway except:

1. When overtaking and passing another bicycle or vehicle proceeding in the same direction; or

2. When preparing for a left turn; or

3. When reasonably necessary to avoid fixed or moving objects or substandard width lanes that make it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge. A "substandard width lane" means a lane that is too narrow for a bicycle and a vehicle to travel safely side by side within the lane.

4. When approaching a place where a right turn is authorized.

5. When riding on a one-way highway with two or more marked traffic lanes ***(5/11-1510)***

Left Turns:

Bicyclists may choose between a vehicular-style left turn or a box-style left turn [5/11-1510]. For vehicular-style left turns, proceed as if driving a vehicle, moving to the left lane or the left side of a single lane prior to the intersection ***(5/11-801)***.

ILLINOIS BICYCLE LAWS

Left Turns continued:

For box-style left-turns, riding near the right side of the roadway, cross the intersecting roadway, stop (as much as practicable out of the way of traffic), yield to any traffic and proceed in the new direction while obeying any official traffic control device or police officer. ***(5/11-1510)***

Hand Signals - Signals shall be given from the left and right side as follows: Left turn and right turn - hand and arm extended horizontally. Stop or decrease of speed - hand and arm extended downward. ***(5/11-806)*** Signal not less than the last 100 feet before the turn,

Use of Sidewalks:

Local ordinance may prohibit bicyclists from using sidewalks. Where permitted, bicyclists must yield to pedestrians and give audible signals before passing pedestrians and give audible signals before passing pedestrians. Bicyclists using sidewalks have all the rights and duties of pedestrians. ***(5/11-1512)***

Lights and Other Equipment on Bicycles - For night riding a front lamp with a white light visible from at least 500 feet to the front and a red reflector on the rear visible from 100 feet to 600 feet are required. A rear light visible from 500 feet may be used in addition to the red reflector. ***(5/11-1507)***

League of Illinois Bicyclists
630-978-0583
www.BikeLIB.org

CHICAGO BICYCLE LAWS

There are several city ordinances that protect cyclists in the Municipal Code.

Rights and Duties 9-52-010

Every person riding a bicycle upon a roadway shall be granted all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle. Cyclists must follow all rules of the roadway including, but not limited to, stopping at stop signs, following traffic signals, not riding on the sidewalk and yielding to pedestrians.

Failure to Exercise Due Care 9-40-160

Bicyclists are protected from careless driving under the same ordinance that protects pedestrians.

Turning Left or Right in Front of a Bicyclist 9-16-020 (e), (f)

Motorists must yield to bicyclists when turning left at an intersection, as they would to any other approaching vehicle. This type of crash is commonly called "the left hook". Motorists are also prohibited from turning right in front of a bicyclist. This crash is commonly called "the right hook". This is similar to the Illinois statute prohibiting a right turn in front of a mass transit bus.

Overtaking a Bicyclist at an Unsafe Distance 9-36-010 (c)

Motorists must pass cyclists at a safe distance, at least three feet of space.

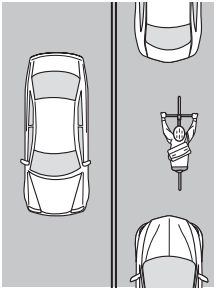
Opening a Vehicle Door into the Path of a Bicyclist 9-80-035

Parking in bike lanes or marked shared lanes endangers bicyclists by forcing them to merge with faster moving traffic.

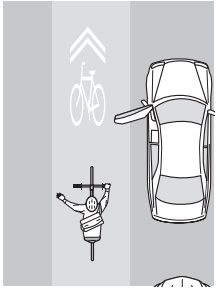
Using a front light and a rear reflector when riding at night 9-52-080

TRAFFIC BASICS

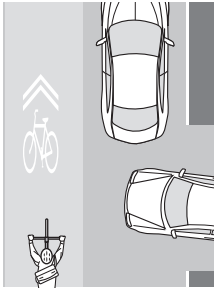
Riding predictably is the best way to ride safely on city streets. Respect the law and follow traffic rules to be predictable to other users of the road.



Be Confident and show it when riding. Learn good handling skills and do not hesitate while riding in traffic.



Be Courteous to other users of the road. Communicate your actions with hand signals, eye contact and sound when needed.



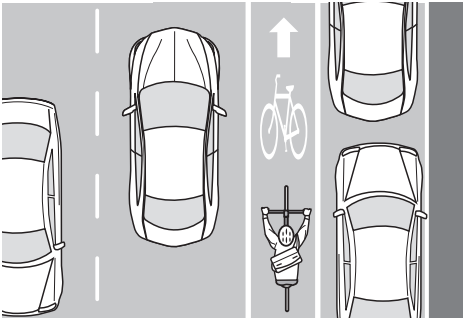
Be Aware of your surroundings and road conditions by constantly scanning the area and regularly looking behind you for traffic.

Tip

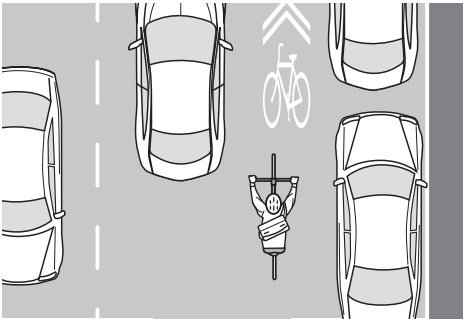
Hold your line when riding in traffic. Do not weave in and out of parked cars, intersections or turn lanes. Ride in a straight line in your travel lane.

TYPES OF BIKE LANES

Bike lanes encourage people to travel by bicycle by giving them a designated space on the street.

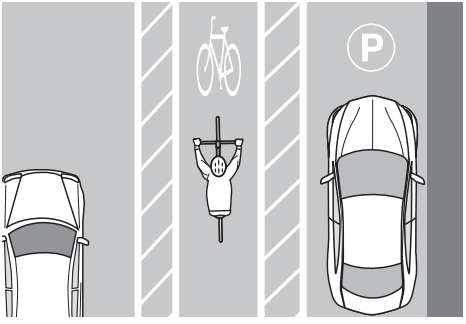


Bike Lanes are striped, on-street lanes with a bicycle symbol and an arrow. Avoid riding in the "door zone" where a door can open into the bike lane.

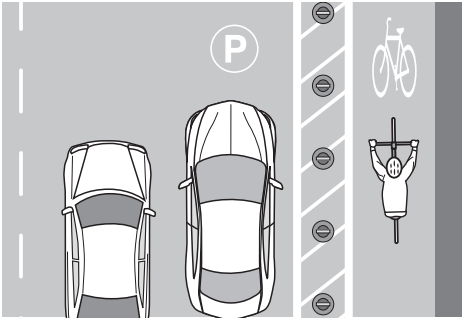


Marked Shared Lanes are not striped but show the bicycle symbol and a chevron; they are typically installed when there is not enough width for a full bike lane.

TYPES OF BIKE LANES



Buffer-Protected Bike Lanes are similar to conventional bike lanes, with extra space to keep cyclists further from parked vehicles and opening doors.



Barrier-Protected Bike Lanes use physical barriers between cyclists and moving cars to help people of all ages feel more comfortable on the street. The lane is usually located next to the curb. Cars park between the bike lane and car travel lane.

RIDING IN TRAFFIC

Never ride against traffic

It is against the law and it is dangerous. If you think you are safer because you can see cars coming you are wrong! 20% of car-bike collisions result from cyclists riding the wrong way. Oncoming cars are not looking for you and turning vehicles can not see you. Riding with traffic allows motorists to gradually overtake and pass bicyclists.

Do not get squeezed out by buses

Bikes and buses often share the same space and play a game of "leapfrog" with each other in traffic. Make sure to pass stopped buses on the left after checking behind to see if it's clear. Give the bus plenty of room when you pass and again when it passes you. Do not pass a bus to make a right turn.

Never wear headphones when cycling

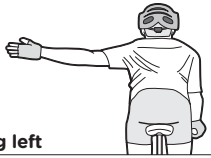
Hearing traffic can be nearly as important as seeing it. Hearing an emergency vehicle, an accelerating car engine or a horn honk from an alley alerts you of a car's position.

Beware of other drivers

Beware of a vehicle's blind spots when riding behind or passing. If you can't see drivers they probably don't see you.
Beware of oncoming vehicles blocking your view Other traffic may be oncoming that you can't see. Wait for a clear view to proceed.
Beware of following vehicles so closely you can't see road conditions, cyclists, pedestrians or traffic.

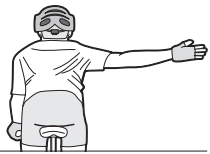
HAND SIGNALS

Use Hand Signals to communicate your movements. You can also use hand signals to point out road obstacles, show commands and express thanks for receiving the right of way. Make Noise by shouting out to get drivers' attention or to warn others of your position.

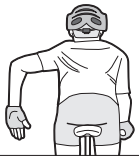


Turning left

Turning right



Turning right

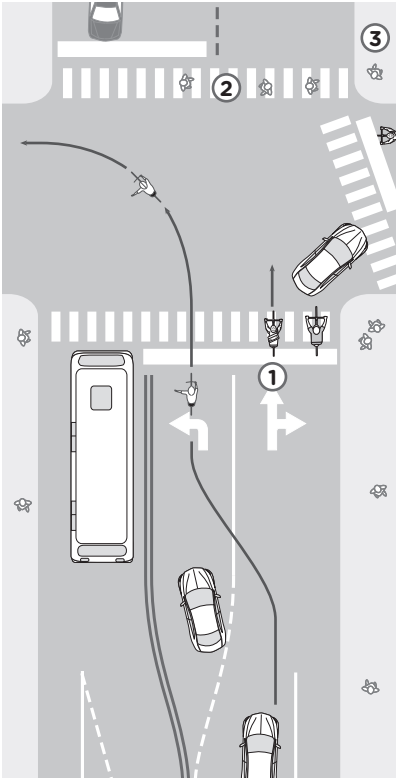


Slowing down

Tip

When turning at intersections, pull in front of traffic when waiting at intersections. This allows you to be seen by stopped motorists and out of car's exhaust. Make eye contact with stopped drivers and check their signals. Stay to the left of right-turning vehicles. Position yourself in line with the hood of the car. Always yield to pedestrians.

TURNING



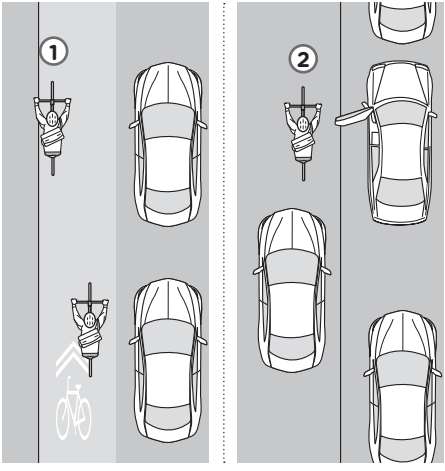
(1) To cross an intersection, use the lane farthest to the right that points to where you are going. Follow lane markings to cross an intersectoin. If you can't change lanes to turn left, ride across the street to the other side and align your bike with traffic.

(2) Always stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

(3) Dont ride on the sidewalk. Chicago law prohibits bike on a sidewalk if you are 12 years old or older, unless it is marked as a bike route.

THE "DOOR" ZONE

The "door zone" is the 3-4 feet along the left side of a parked car where an opening door can hit and seriously injure a cyclist.



When riding in a bike lane ride on the left side of the lane:
(1) Ride at least 3 feet away from parked cars on the street
(2) Take the full lane if there's no room to safely pass open car doors and to avoid exiting passengers

Tip

Look inside parked cars and their side rearview mirrors when passing and move outside the "door zone" if you see exiting passengers. Watch behind you for traffic when moving out of the "door zone" and into the full lane. A bike mirror helps you see behind to know if cars are approaching.

WHAT TO DO IN A CRASH

Crashes can be scary and disorienting. Here are some important actions to take if you have been in a crash with a motor vehicle.

Stay down
Do not move unless your safety is in danger. Prevent further injury and draw attention to the scene by staying down until police arrive.

Call the police
Have someone call for the police and ambulance. Report driver and vehicle information if accident is a hit and run.

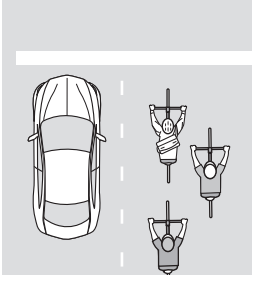
Get motorist and witness info
Get name, address, phone number, driver's license and plate, car description, and insurance info from every vehicle driver involved. Get witness' name, address and phone number.

Get police info
Get officer's name, badge number, the police report number and where to call for a copy. Make sure a police report is made.

Stay calm
After a crash you get very excited. You may not notice an injury and aggravate it further. You may also suffer from shock because of excitement. Try to stay calm and focus on the situation. Get treated by paramedics and go to the hospital if necessary. Have someone else gather information for you if you are unable. Have emergency contact information in your wallet or printed inside your helmet. If you can't take your bike from the scene lock it there and come back for it later. For more information about what to do after a crash, visit www.activetrans.org/knowyourrights/after-a-crash or call 312.869.HELP

STREETS FOR CYCLING

Don't know where to bicycle in Chicago? Check the Chicago Bike Map. Hundreds of streets were considered and thousands of miles ridden to select the most convenient and appropriate routes. Many of the recommended routes will help you get around situations unfriendly to bicycling (such as expressways). While routes throughout Chicago are identified, some areas of the city have fewer choices than others. To view or request a copy of the map go to ***chicagocompletestreets.org/bikemap***



Riding in Groups

Riding a bike isn't only a great way to get around on your own, but it can be a great time with friends too! Remember a few things when riding with a group. Be responsible for yourself. Be aware of your position and the position of those around you. Announce obstacles to fellow riders. When maneuvering through intersections stay close and when appropriate, ride side by side and take the lane.

BIKES ON TRANSIT

To make cycling even more convenient, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) welcomes bicycles on trains and buses through the year-round CTA Bike & Ride program.

On CTA

You can bring your bike on CTA trains weekdays except during rush hour (7am-9am and 4pm-6pm) and any time during weekends and holidays (except July 3rd). You can also put your bike on the front of a CTA bus bicycle carrying rack anytime. There is no extra charge for taking your bike with you on the CTA. Taking your bike on the CTA can allow you to make longer trips that you may not be able to do with your bike or the CTA alone.

For more info about bikes on the CTA call 888-YOUR-CTA or go to www.transitchicago.com and check out the CTA's Bike & Ride brochure.

On Pace

You can take your bike on all Pace suburban buses.

For trip-planning, route, fare and schedule information call 847-364-PACE or visit www.pacebus.com. For travel and trip planning on CTA, Pace and Metra call RTA information at 836-7000.

Tips for bikes on CTA and Pace buses

1. Alert bus driver of bike rack use, squeeze handle and lower rack. If bike rack is full wait for the next bus.

2. Place bike in empty space closest to the bus. The first bike in faces the curb, the second bike faces the street.

3. Secure the support arm over the front wheel. Do not lock bike to rack. Board bus and Board bus and pay. fare. Notify driver when leaving bus.

BIKES ON TRANSIT

On Metra

Metra trains also allow bicycles during non-rush hours. Two bikes are allowed per train. Ask the conductor to direct you to the appropriate bike storage area; it varies by train car type. You must bring a bungee cord to secure your bike on a Metra train.

Check the train schedule for more information at metrarail.com.

On Greyhound Bus

Bicycles must be packed in a carrying case or box, securely fastened and checked. An additional fee may be charged.

Go to www.greyhound.com for more info.

On Amtrak

Amtrak has roll-on service on some lines or check as baggage on others.

Go to www.amtrak.com for more info.

On Airlines

Bicycle accommodations vary between airlines.

For recommended airlines visit the League of American Bicyclists at www.bikeleague.org.

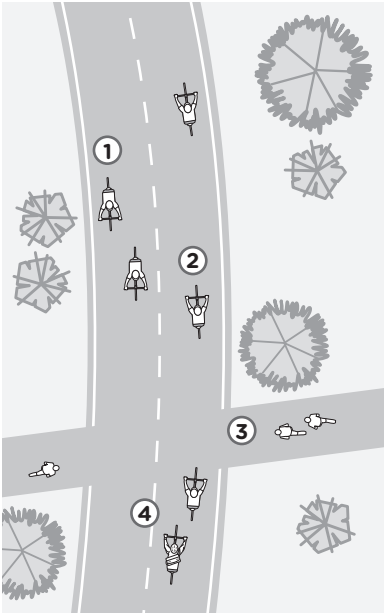
Tips for bikes on CTA trains

1. Stand near either end of the train car holding your bike securely. Do not block exits.

2. When sitting, place your foot near the wheel to prevent bike from rolling. Don't block the aisle and be aware of the space your bike occupies.

3. Use wheelchair space if unoccupied. Move if space is needed.

OFF STREET CYCLING



1. Keep to the right.
Yield to pedestrians and slower moving trail users except when passing. Slow down through heavy traffic.

2. Use your path.
Do not bike on designated walking or running paths.

3. Be careful at crossings.
Look both ways. Yield to through traffic and remember pedestrians have the right of way.

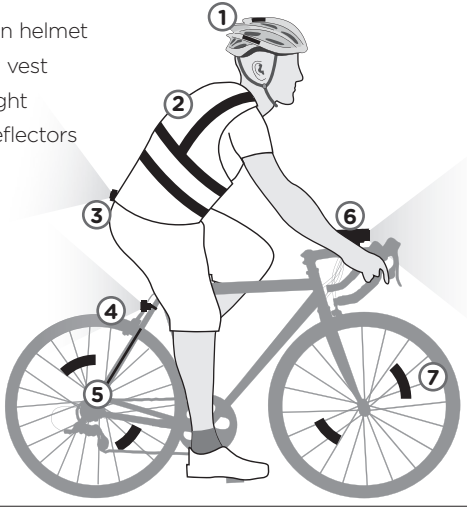
4. Advise others when passing.
Sound your bell or horn or call out when approaching pedestrians or slower cyclists, then pass safely on the left.

Biking on Campus
is a great way to get to classes and elsewhere around school. Most schools have shared use paths for cyclists and others. Obey posted signs, stop for pedestrians and be aware of any special path rules your school may have.

RIDING AT NIGHT

The first rule of riding at night is to BE SEEN! Both Chicago and Illinois law require a front light and a rear reflector when riding at night.

1. Reflective tape on helmet
2. Reflective safety vest
3. Clip-on strobe light
4. Rear light and reflectors
5. Reflective tape
6. Headlight
7. Reflective sidewall tires



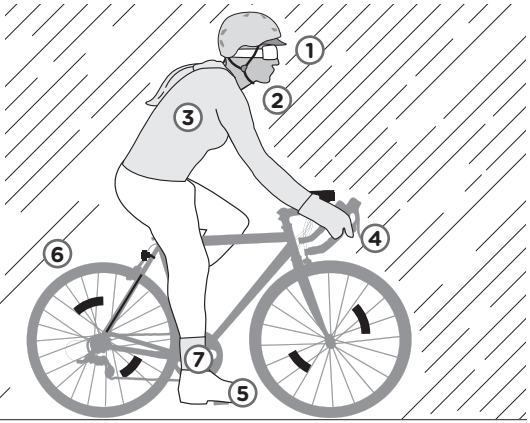
Tip

Ride with extra caution at night. It is harder to see drivers and predict their moves. There are many tired drivers at night and some may be drunk. Be alert and know your way. Choose a route with which you're familiar.

RIDING IN BAD WEATHER

You can bike in all weather year round with the right equipment. You'll be warm and dry biking while others wait in the cold for their car to warm up or bus to arrive. For more info visit www.bikewinter.org.

1. Ski goggles
2. Balaclava
3. Rain gear
4. Ski gloves
5. Shoe covers
6. Fenders
7. Water-proof boots



Tip

Dress in layers when dressing for cold weather.

Base layer: Moisture-wicking fabric like polypropylene, polyester, nylon or silk.

MIddle layer: Wear an insulating layer that will hold heat like wool or fleece.

Outer layer: Weather proof outer layer will keep you warm and dry in wet conditions.

Photo: Serge Lubomudrov

CHICAGO

A GUIDE *for* CYCLISTS

Bicycling is a great way to get to work, school and around the city. Inside this Safe Cycling in Chicago guide learn great tips and tricks on how to use your bike for transportation in Chicago. For additional free copies of this and other great City of Chicago bicycle publications, including the Chicago Bike Map, visit **chicagocompletestreets.org**

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CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE

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